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ARGENTINA

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Non-Proliferation and the Treaty of TlatelolcoI. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Non-proliferation is a major U.S. interest in Argentina. Argentina has substantial uranium reserves and an ambitious nuclear power program. It has the most advanced nuclear capability of any Latin American state and the greatest potential for an autonomous fuel cycle. American efforts to prevent proliferation in Brazil, and Latin America generally, depend critically on Argentina's acceptance of full-scope safeguards (which Argentina has shown a conditional willingness to consider) and deferral of its fuel reprocessing system program.

Argentina has signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco, but it has not ratified it. This puts it in the same category with Surinam. If Argentina is willing to consider safeguards, it should be willing to ratify Tlatelolco. And even if it ratifies the treaty, it could refuse to waive its entry into force as Chile and Brazil have. Ratification by Argentina, therefore, might be of strictly symbolic significance but a dramatic way to further the hemisphere's efforts to create a nuclear-free region.

II. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT POSITION

The Argentine government has stated that it seeks nuclear technology in order to satisfy its energy needs and for strictly peaceful purposes.

III. OUR POSITION

Our intelligence community believes that Argentina is proceeding apace to acquire an independent, unsafeguarded reprocessing capacity. We believe this is a sufficiently dangerous possibility to warrant our consideration of the transfer of sensitive heavy water technology to the Argentines if they will forego reprocessing. We also realize that any approach to the Argentines must be made in tandem with approaches to Brazil. Both watch each other warily.

IV. SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

-- The United States is greatly concerned over the risks inherent in the spread of nuclear explosive capabilities. We feel it is imperative that the world community face these growing dangers squarely and take decisive steps to reduce them.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S20000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

 Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
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 Date ☐ Declassify on Reason

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-- ~~At the same time,~~ the United States recognizes the need for states to expand and diversify their energy resources on a secure basis.

-- The depth of President Carter's concern was evidenced by our signature of Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will obligate us not to deploy nuclear weapons in the Latin American area.

-- Argentina's commitment to the peaceful uses of atomic energy could be conveyed dramatically to the world by ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It is hard to understand why Argentina and Surinam are the only two states which have not ratified the Treaty.

-- We would urge you also to waive the requirements for entry into force as twenty-one Latin American states have done. We would welcome the opportunity to work together with you so that other eligible signatories of the Treaty took the same steps.

-- I know this is a complex topic, but ratification of the Treaty would be a significant demonstration of your government's commitment to peace through law.

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